

[7 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

and Micro-Finance Intermediaries (mFIs). They promote the groups, nurture and train them and then approach banks for bulk loans for Onlending to the SHGs.

Expansion of Panipat Refinery Project

*238. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has decided to hold back the proposed refinery expansion project at Panipat as Haryana Government has refused to give the sales tax and entry tax incentives; and

(b) if not, the present status of the project with the details of the existing capacity and the capacity addition because of the IOC's proposed expansion and the estimated cost of the project?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The Panipat refinery expansion project was approved by the Board of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in August, 1999. It envisages expansion of the refining capacity from the existing 6 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) to 12 MMTPA at an estimated cost of Rs. 3,365 crore.

Subsequently, Haryana Government has imposed Haryana Local Area Development Tax (HLADT) with effect from 5.5.2000 on various goods entering Haryana State. Impact of HLADT and sales tax incentives on project economics is under review. IOCL has taken up the matter for exemption of HLADT and provision of sales tax incentives with Haryana Government.

The process licensors for various units have been selected. Project management consultants have been lined up and basic engineering completed. Environmental clearance has been received on 9.4.2001.

Telephone on Demand

*239. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an apparent need for cost effective and reliable technologies with low operational costs and maintenance efforts for rural and remote areas;

(b) whether telephone which has now become essential would be made available on demand by 2002 all over the country; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government in these directions?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PAS WAN):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is proposed to provide telephone on demand all over the country by the year 2002.

(c) Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology has been selected by BSNL for covering the rural and remote areas. This technology has been found to be cost effective and reliable with low operational cost and needs less maintenance efforts. For inaccessible areas which cannot be served with WLL technology or cables, satellite terminals will be utilized to provide the telecom services.

For providing telephones on demand, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. (MTNL) have made plans for expansions of telephone exchanges and setting up of new exchanges to meet the demand for new phone connections. Private operators have also been given licence to provide basic as well as cellular telephones. It is expected that both of them together will be able to achieve the objective of providing telephones on demand by the year 2002.

Faulty Telephones in Rural Areas

† *240. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the faulty telephones in rural areas are not being repaired for quite a long time as a result of which consumers in rural areas have to face a lot of difficulties.

(b) whether Government are going to take some concrete steps to ensure that the defective phones in such areas are repaired at the earliest; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) While every effort is made to repair expeditiously faulty telephones in rural areas, there are areas where due to reasons such as inadequate road infrastructure, law and order problems, erratic power supply, it has not been possible to ensure prompt restoration.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.